WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image processor for generating and outputting a combined image including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye and a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the image processor comprising:

digital watermark embedding means for embedding digital watermark data in text and/or image data combined with the patterned image to produce the combined image.

2. An image processor for generating and outputting a combined image including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye and a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the image processor comprising:

digital watermark embedding means for embedding digital watermark data in the patterned image,

wherein combining text and/or image data with the digitally watermarked patterned image produces the combined image.

3. An image processor comprising:

inputting means for inputting and reading a combined image including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye, a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, and text and/or image data embedded with a digital watermark;

extracting means for extracting the text and/or image data from the combined image and extracting the digital watermark from the extracted text and/or image data;

inputting means for inputting a permission code for copying image data composed of a combination of patterned image and the extracted text and/or image data onto a recording medium; and

copy regulation means for regulating the copying based on the extracted digital watermark and the permission code.

4. An image processor comprising:

inputting means for inputting and reading a combined image as digital data, the combined image including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye, a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the background being a patterned image with an embedded digital

watermark, and the combined image being a combination of the background image and text/and or image data;

extracting means for extracting digital watermark data embedded in the patterned image by separating and extracting the text and/or image data included in the combined image from the patterned image;

inputting means for inputting a permission code for copying image data onto a recording medium, the image data being composed of a combination of a patterned image and the extracted text and/or image; and

copy regulation means for regulating the copying based on the extracted digital watermark and the permission code.

5. An image processor according to claim 3, wherein the copying regulation means regulates the copying of the combined image onto a recording medium when the extracted digital watermark indicates that copying of the combined image is permitted.

6. An image processor according to claim 3, wherein the copying regulation means regulates the copying of part of the combined image onto a recording medium when the extracted digital watermark indicates that copying of part of the combined image is permitted.

7. An image processor according to claim 3 wherein the copying regulation means prohibits or stops the operation of the copying of the combined image onto a recording medium when the extracted digital watermark indicates that copying of the combined image is prohibited.

8. A method for image processing for generating and outputting a combined image that includes a latent image unperceivable by the human eye and a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the method comprising:

a step of embedding a digital watermark into text and/or image combined with the patterned image;

wherein combining the digitally watermarked text and/or image data and the patterned image produces the combined image.

9. A method for image processing for generating and outputting a combined image that includes a latent image unperceivable by the human eye and a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the method comprising:

a step of embedding a digital watermark into the

patterned image,

wherein combining text and/or image data with the digitally watermarked patterned image produces the combined image.

10. A method for image processing comprising:

an inputting step for inputting and reading a combined image, including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye, a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, and text and/or image data embedded with a digital watermark;

an extracting step for extracting the text and/or image data from the combined image and extracting the digital watermark from the extracted text and/or image data;

an inputting step for inputting a permission code for copying image data composed of a combination of a patterned image and the extracted text and/or image data onto a recording medium; and

a copy regulating step for regulating the copying based on the extracted digital watermark and the permission code.

11. A method for image processing comprising:

inputting and reading a combined image of digital data,

including a latent image unperceivable by the human eye, a patterned image in the background allowing the latent image to appear clearly on a recording medium when data recorded on a recording medium is copied onto another recording medium, the background being a patterned image with an embedded digital watermark, the combined image being a combination of the background image and text/and or image data;

extracting digital watermark data embedded in the patterned image by separating and extracting the text and/or image data included in the combined image from the patterned image;

inputting a permission code for copying image data composed of a combination of a patterned image and the extracted text and/or image data onto a recording medium; and

regulating the copying based on the extracted digital watermark and the permission code.

12. A program commanding a computer to execute the image processing according to claim 8.

13. A program commanding a computer to execute the image processing according to claim 9.

14. A program commanding a computer to execute the image processing according to claim 10.

15. A program commanding a computer to execute the image processing according to claim 11.

16. A storage medium readable by a computer for storing the program according to claim 12.

17. A storage medium readable by a computer for storing the program according to claim 13.

18. A storage medium readable by a computer for storing the program according to claim 14.

19. A storage medium readable by a computer for storing the program according to claim 15.